

Housing Management Bulletin



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MANAGEMENT DIVISION
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING OFFICIALS

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MANAGEMENT CONTRIBUTES TO DEFENSE HOUSING DESIGN

Two of the Division's oldest members -- Sherwood L. Reeder (Chairman of the Division's Committee on Publications) and O. Kline Fulmer (a member of the Division's Committee on Maintenance Problems) -- were appointed late in December by Administrator Carmody to positions with the Federal Works Agency under its new Lanham Act defense housing program. Mr. Reeder is now in San Diego, California, in charge of a 3,000-unit FWA project and Mr. Fulmer is in Washington, D.C., working directly under the Administrator's special assistant, Mr. Clark Foreman, checking all defense housing plans for management details.

Mr. Reeder's Duties

The San Diego project is in connection with the naval base there and is said to be the largest single housing project being financed with Lanham Act funds. Increased activities in the area have made it necessary to provide housing immediately for about 10,000 defense workers. Mr. Reeder's duties will involve working out satisfactory arrangements for schools and other public services and he is also to serve as the management representative during the period of construction, advising Administrator Carmody as to the progress made by the contractor.



SHERWOOD REEDER



O. KLINE FULMER

Mr. Fulmer's Duties

Mr. Fulmer's job is to see that the management aspects of all housing produced by the Federal Works Agency are thoroughly considered in the planning stages. As a check list in reviewing housing plans, Mr. Fulmer has set up 32 items under the heading of "General Community" and 27 items under the heading "Dwelling Units." The principal considerations in checking the community are: surrounding neighborhood; streets; utilities; fire and police protection; garbage, trash, and ash collection; schools, churches, and community recreational facilities. In checking plans for the dwelling units themselves, the main considerations are: storage space for all types of personal and project equipment; heating; cooking facilities; interior finishes; doors and locks; laundries; plumbing; electrical installations; kitchen equipment.

Mr. Fulmer is on loan to FWA from the Farm Security Administration. He has been with FSA since 1935, first as associate architect at Greenbelt, Maryland, and from 1937 on as Assistant Community Manager there. Mr. Reeder also is a former FSA man, having been Community Manager of Greendale, Wisconsin.

AN EDITORIAL COMMENT . . .

The Division feels that the two appointments noted above are really front page and welcome news. There has been a strong feeling among managers that many of their problems go back to errors in planning and construction. Hence, with the start of a new housing program -- the defense housing program under the Federal Works Agency -- it is a real sign of progress that two managers are to assist in directing initial plans and are to see that the management point of view gets a hearing.

SEND NEWS, IDEAS, REPORTS, AND OTHER MATERIAL ON MANAGEMENT TO THE BULLETIN

LAWNMOWER STORAGE SHEDS

In St. Petersburg (Florida), the management of 242-unit Jordan Park has purchased 22 hand operated, 16" blade lawn mowers at \$9.90 each--20 for tenant maintenance of their own front, rear, and side yards; one for project maintenance by the management; and one as a spare. They have also purchased a power operated, hand propelled Beazley "Whirlwind" for project maintenance.

Lawn mower stations are located so that each lawn mower services from ten to sixteen tenant families. The average is 12.1. The stations are in the rear of the buildings, the mowers being kept in little rooms or closets which have a roof and a door with an ordinary hook and eye fastening. Inside, the lawn mower handles fit between two blocks of wood with a galvanized hasp fitting over the lawn mower handle.

Tag and Key System

A padlock locks the mower in so that it cannot be removed except by a tenant who has a key. Little round brass tags with the dwelling unit number stamped on them are furnished each tenant--the hole in the tag being just large enough to fit over the arm of the padlock. When a tenant takes a lawn mower, he places his tag on the lock and closes it. Then if some other tenant wants the mower, he immediately sees at which unit the machine is in use. If this second tenant takes the lawn mower, the first tenant removes his tag and the second tenant places his on the lock, thus making the lawn mower always traceable. Each tenant has a key for the lawn mower at his station. All locks are master-keyed and the project, of course, has a master key to all locks; also separate tags in case tags are lost.

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from Ray Y. Copelin, Projects Manager,
Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles

Early last fall the Division's Committee on Publications appointed correspondents in each of the seven regions of the country to regularly report news items to the BULLETIN. To date the only actively functioning "Walter Winchell" that the BULLETIN can claim is its West Coast reporter, Ray Y. Copelin, whose coverage is constant, interesting, and generous. We quote below the best current items from Mr. Copelin's notes, most of which relate to Carmelitos, recently tenanted first project of the Los Angeles County Authority.

STAFF BICYCLES . . . "Due to the size of our Carmelitos project, this Authority purchased two bicycles, one woman's and one man's, and they certainly are time savers. As you know, many calls must be made on tenants in the project during the day and the staff certainly make good use of the bicycles."

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT DONATED . . . "Just received another check for \$800 from the Hollywood Turf Club to install the playground equipment for the Community Center Playground for our Harbor Hills Project (Los Angeles). Some people in town seem to think accepting race track money is accepting tainted money but our only comment is that it 'taint enough.'"

TENANT ACTIVITY . . . "The tenants seem to be very enthusiastic. One of their representatives came to me the other day and asked if the project would furnish a piano as they now have some 65 youngsters who would like to take lessons. I suggested that they would feel much better about it if they took up a collection to purchase their own piano so that it would belong to the tenants themselves. This they did wholeheartedly, took up a collection, and bought a piano. We are now trying to work out a WPA sponsorship for teaching these youngsters."

WELFARE FUND . . . "Perhaps the most significant action that has been taken by the residents is the proposal that a welfare fund be established, from which loans could be made in case of emergencies, such as sickness, death, sudden loss of employment, or other unexpected difficulty in meeting rent payment. The fund would be built up by contributions of five cents a week from each family. In a year \$1,578.20 would be paid into the fund, which would be administered by the chairman of a welfare committee and a member of the project Manager's staff, serving as an honorary treasurer. A committee would investigate each application for a loan and no withdrawals from the fund could be made without the signatures of both the committee chairman and the honorary treasurer.

MANAGEMENT AND DESIGN . . . "From our experience, it is certainly advisable to have the Community House on any project completed first. The general offices are almost always located in the Community Center Building and it saves utilizing units in the project as temporary office space. Also

helps a great deal if the Community Center playground equipment is installed to occupy the children's time and keep them off of new lawns, etc. This Authority just paid \$250 damage done to new lawns, which we feel could have been obviated if the playground equipment had been installed."

MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS . . . "We installed three sand boxes as a trial in our Carmelitos project and have found that they will be such a maintenance problem and expense that we will install no more. We are also eliminating all sand boxes in our Harbor Hills Project. There they just had a dirt bottom and immediately sand was installed the children would dig right down to the bottom in making their tunnels and the sand would be filled with dirt so that our maintenance and replacement cost for sand would be prohibitive. Therefore, we are just paving these areas and eliminating the sand boxes entirely. Instead, we will install small merry-go-rounds, junglegyms, and bars, which will get away from maintenance and keep the children occupied in the play areas."

SUNDAY SCHOOL . . . "To the surprise of the manager of the project, 65 small children appeared at the community house one Sunday morning and announced that they had come for Sunday School. The Manager didn't know what to do about the situation for a moment but he had no cause to worry. Half a dozen mothers walked into the building and eased his mind by telling him that they were going to teach Sunday School classes themselves. 'Everyone in the Residents' Club approved the idea of having Sunday School in the Community House,' one mother declared. 'We feel that the spiritual side of our lives is as important as all the other community activities we plan to carry on.'"

STIMULATING TENANT APPLICATIONS . . . "From our past experience, rather than depend upon publicity to bring in tenants and acting upon the assumption that it is necessary to go out and get them, we are calling on all manufacturing organizations within a ten-mile radius, distributing literature to employees as they come to work in the morning, and then going back to answer questions during their leisure time immediately after lunch."

In addition, the Los Angeles County Authority has worked up two mimeographed letters. One is sent to new tenants with the Authority's letters of acceptance of applications and another is handed to each visitor who passes through the demonstration unit of a project. The letters are informally phrased and urge friend-to-friend, word-of-mouth recommendations of the project.

THE MASTHEAD

Do you recognize the man in the hat? He is Allen Mowbray, motion picture star, presiding as master of ceremonies at the late November opening of Carmelitos, at which there were some 5000 persons in attendance.

The BULLETIN would like to point out that two months ago the Masthead carried a picture of President Roosevelt dedicating a public housing project. This month we picture . . . Hollywood and housing. Which is some indication of the headliner tendency of current housing public relations policy.

NOTES FROM THE REGIONALS

Members of the Division's Executive Council were sent, one to each of the six regional meetings, to assist in conducting, and to report on, management sessions. The following notes are from their reports.

HARTFORD (Region I) . . . Councilman J. S. Raffety reports as outstanding in the session on Housing Management - Organization, Personnel, and Office Procedures the Hartford Authority's "consolidated tenant ledger, tenant personal history, and apartment maintenance card, which is well worth giving further consideration to, especially for small housing authorities with small projects where the use of an accounting machine is not indicated."

NEWARK (Region II) . . . Mr. Harry B. Weiss, Director of Tenant Relations of the Newark Housing Authority, commented: "Mr. Silverman stated that problems of tenant relations start with the lowest person in personnel. Has that been taken up in selection of maintenance staff? My thought on this is that the utility man or maintenance mechanic . . . is the one who has most contact with the tenants and in addition to his qualifications as a maintenance man, he should be selected with an eye to his ability to handle people also."

NEWARK (Region II) . . . As a part of the discussion following the session on Community and Tenant Relations, the question of how much "social service work" a manager should undertake was given considerable attention. Joseph P. Anderson of Pittsburgh said: "... I believe that the manager should try to take over duties ordinarily given by social agencies where the manager feels that the existing social agency is not doing the job thoroughly and properly. I believe that the manager should evaluate all social services and take over various responsibilities according to his findings in the evaluation."

HOSPITALIZATION PLAN

► Chairman Sharpe reports that Greenhills has qualified for community membership in the Cincinnati Blue Cross Hospital Care Plan. Forty per cent of the families residing in Greenhills have enrolled and it is anticipated that at least 50 per cent will finally belong. It is believed that this is one of the first instances (if not the first) where a community has made available to its residents the advantages of hospital care. Usually such plans are restricted to industrial plants. Under the present arrangement the tenants are billed quarterly by the Hospital Care Corporation.

FOOD LOCKER PLANT

► Chairman Sharpe also reports that Greenhills is to have a refrigerated food locker plant, making available cold storage locker facilities to handle products of tenants' farms and gardens for the mutual benefit of producers and consumers. The plant will provide for 250 lockers with room for expansion. It is felt that this represents another step in working out the integration of urban and rural economy originally contemplated in the establishment of Greenhills. They already have a Farmers' Market. Under this arrangement milk, meat, and vegetables raised on the farms are made available to the urban development. It is believed that this will result in substantial savings to the consumers and an improved income for producers. FSA has approved a cooperative loan of \$10,000 for the purpose of installing the plant.

CARE OF REFRIGERATORS

► The management at Lockefield Gardens (Indianapolis) has found that almost 10 per cent of the refrigerator door insulators in the project have been damaged because tenants wash this rubber lining with alkali soaps. The manufacturers

HINTS TO THE HOUSING MANAGER

have warned that the inside of refrigerators should be washed only with warm water in which some baking soda has been dissolved, which will keep the box clean but will not injure the insulator fabric.

FIRST TENANTS

► Pictured below is John T. Long, Housing Manager of Ramona Gardens (Los Angeles) signing up the first tenants for the project. The father of the family pictured earns \$20 weekly; brought his family to a 5- $\frac{1}{2}$ room unit in Ramona Gardens from a 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ room apartment in a building where 56 families shared toilets one to seven families, with no private bathrooms.



► In addition to his project management work, Manager Long is teaching Introduction to Public Housing at the University of Southern California's night School of Government.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

► Bob R. Roberts of the Housing Authority of the City of San Antonio told the Regional Conference in Austin this month: "With proper instructions to tenants at the time they occupy units, much can be accomplished to help hold down upkeep cost and to prevent unnecessary damage to building, fixtures, and equipment. The manager must use such care in his instructions as to create a desire in the tenants' mind to care for the units occupied by them and to have at all times friendly and cooperative feeling between the management and tenant."

In this connection, Mr. Roberts suggested maintenance procedures for: floors and inside walls; bath and kitchen fixtures; hot water heater; cook stove and space heater; outside care of buildings; repairs and painting; roofs; damage to buildings and equipment. The specific suggestions made in each instance are on file with the BULLETIN.

COMPETITIVE EXAMS

► An indication that the housing management profession is moving beyond the local-boy stage and assuming the national character of other professions may be found in the fact that of the more than 130 applicants who took the written part of the Civil Service examination for Supervisor of Tenant Relations for the Detroit Housing Commission (notice of which accompanied the October BULLETIN), the sixteen finalists in the oral testing were from all parts of the country - Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Washington. George Schermer, former Director of Tenant Selection for the Chicago Housing Authority, was awarded the job and left Chicago to take up his new duties on January 1.

► Three sets of examination questions were used by the Authority in Great Falls (Montana) recently in selecting a maintenance mechanic: the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Tests, the O'Rourke Mechanical Aptitude Test, and a special test made up by the Authority specifically for the position, in which 81 questions, with lists of suggested answers, were posed. The questions in the Authority's examination covered problems of electrical installations, plumbing, refrigeration, stoves, carpentry, redecoration of rooms and furniture, disinfection, grounds maintenance, heating, gardening.